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ABSTRACT

Management guidelines for colleges and universities that include policies, goals, and procedures are presented. Guidelines include the following: (1) trustees must have final authority for the institution; (2) the planning process should recognize that policy and direction generally flow down (the organizational structure) while process (procedure) flows up; (3) the planning process for an organization should "fit" the organizational structure and financial resources of the organization; (4) planning is a continuous process; (5) the basic components of planning are people, data, and process; (6) broad-based participation of people in formal, institutional planning is best achieved through means such as task forces, special study assignments, and open hearings; (7) accurate data are required on historical and trend lines and projections; and (8) institutional planning, departmental planning, and program planning occur simultaneously. To provide a basis for institutional plans, an outline is presented on 5 questions that should be considered regarding enrollment, 10 academic program questions, 11 marketing and admissions questions, and 7 financial questions. (SW)

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GUIDELINES FOR DESIGNING AND MANAGING A PLANNING PROCESS

By John Edgar Miller and Hugh L. Thompson

INTRODUCTION

The leadership of a college might consider adopting specific guidelines to help them manage their institutions more effectively. Board members, presidents, deans, and other administrative officers will find guidelines are a useful tool as they develop strategies and tactics for advancing their colleges during the 80's.

The literature circulating throughout the educational community provides a thorough and sometimes threatening review and analysis of the problems educators are facing. Chronicles, journals, newspaper articles, newsletters, books, and monographs are discussing the actual and potential impact of inflation, government regulations, tenure, collective bargaining, standards for accreditation, open access, financial aid, population trends, financial development, and other factors associated with the management of an educational institution.

Many techniques have been proposed as possible solutions to these and other problems. Professional associations, consulting firms, professors of management, and other individuals and groups have developed and promoted their models for planning, management, and evaluation. Many models or solutions have a unique acronym. MBO, PME, ZBB, PPBS, ABO, PPBE, MIS, TIS, and other processes are described in books, pamphlets, and at annual conferences.

Meanwhile, colleges continue to operate with deficits, continue to delay necessary salary improvements, continue to shortcut preventive maintenance, continue to postpone capital improvements, otherwise continue

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to mortgage their futures. The various problems create a survival crises for some -- especially small private colleges. Almost all the tax exempt not-for-profit institutions seem to be mounting more extensive, aggressive, and intensive appeals to their respective alumni, affluent individuals, corporations and foundations.

The problems listed above can be analyzed on both the macro level (national and state) and the micro level (specific area or institution). Much of the literature, discussion and debate on the issues and problems outlined above focus on the macro level. This article focuses on an approach for a college -- the micro level.

Management guidelines are defined as statements which identify parameters for the operation of an insitution. The guidelines include policies, goals, and procedures.

Many of the guidelines suggested in this article include statistical minimums, maximums, or averages. THE FIGURES USED ARE NOT RECOMMENDATIONS, IDEALS, OR OPTIMUMS +/- MERELY EXAMPLES. THE SPECIFIC FIGURES INCLUDED IN MANY OF THE GUIDELINES SHOULD NOT BE ADOPTED WITHOUT CAREFUL ANALYSIS. Each guideline should stimulate discussion and analysis which result in a minimum, maximum or average appropriate to the college doing the analysis. Furthermore, the guidelines suggested in this article should not be applied in a vacuum. The extenuating circumstances at a college will influence which guidelines are adopted and the limits associated with each.

A draft version of proposed guidelines should be shared with administration, faculty, and staff. This process will stimulate thinking, planning, evaluation and help eliminate surprises and crises. Effective leadership will define (or ask others to propose definitions for) the variables which can be used to monitor the quality, vitality, and stability of the organizations they are leading.

Management guidelines should be reviewed periodically. This task could be assigned to a planning committee or to a special, ad hoc task force. The purpose of the review should be to revise those guidelines which require revision and to document additional guidelines -- given the results of institutional operations during the previous year. This review could also be used to revise the statistical minimums, maximums, or averages which were established during a previous year.

All management guidelines could be collected in one loose-leaf binder. This binder might also include a copy of a faculty handbook, student handbook, collective bargaining agreements(s), and other documents that define management or administrative policies and procedures.

Management guidelines which represent statements of institutional policy or long term institutional goals must be approved by the Board of Trustees. Management guidelines which represent operating procedures must be communicated to the Board of Trustees. It should be understood, therefore, that all institutional policies are management guidelines, but not all management guidelines are necessarily institutional policies.

Anyone should be free to propose "Management Guidelines." Proposals for new management guidelines or recommendations to change existing management guidelines should be submitted in writing to the president or appropriate designee. The administrator(s) responsible for the area(s) most directly affected by the recommendation or proposed revision should respond to the proposal. The administration might consult with representatives of the faculty or representatives of the student body when proposed management guidelines have direct impact upon their welfare or the activities and operations with which they are directly involved. The president or his designee should approve all management guidelines. Or, this task might be delegated to an administrative council, executive

committee, planning committee, special task force, or college council (senate). The president should determine which management guidelines are also policies -- thus requiring approval of the Board of Trustees.

The ultimate purpose of an educational institution is to assist students to learn. Why students want to learn, or what they want to learn, or what the faculty think they should learn may vary from one college to the next and from one year (or decade) to the next. Whatever the mission and curriculum, the process of delivering the educational program and various support services must be managed with the available human, physical, and fiscal resources. These resources are limited for most colleges. Therefore, application of certain guidelines will assure the educational process meets desired levels of both quality and efficiency.

GUIDELINES FOR LONG RANGE PLANNING

Institutional planning received considerable attention during the 70's. Many institutions established formal structures and procedures for developing a long range plan. However, the focus of too many planning efforts was limited to form and failed to deal with substance. Too many institutions developed well written plans projecting vitality and stability in the not-too-distant future while their HEGIS reports showed declining or less than stable enrollments, financial audits revealed operating deficits, and its personnel profiles showed disturbing levels of turn over. One reason for this paradox is that the planning process was not designed to deal with reality.

Many long range plans fail to deal with reality because the planners did not use a process that recognized the distinctions between participatory rather than democratic decision making -- or communication vs concensus. The Planning process does not need to be"democratic" to be effective.

Participatory planning is not the same as democratic decision-making. Communication is not a synonym for consensus. The leadership responsible for developing institutional plans and the procedures necessary to produce such plans must understand the implications associated with the differences between these concepts when they are considering the guidelines. Some of the guidelines which follow might be more accurately labeled as tenants.

1. Trustees bear final authority and responsibility for the institution. Decision-making authority must be compatible and consistent with line/staff relationships and the ultimate legal and fiduciary accountability vested in the Board. The Board of Trustees and president must lead the planning process. Where they do not, a leadership vacuum develops.
2. The planning process should recognize that policy and direction generally flow down (the organizational structure) while process (procedure) flows up.
3. The planning process for an organization should "fit" the organizational structure and financial resources of the organization.
4. Planning is a process, not an event. It is never finished.
5. The basic components of planning are people, data, and process. The relative importance of these components will vary from one day and one problem (issue) to the next.
6. Broad-based participation of people in formal, institutional planning is best achieved through task forces, special study assignments, open hearings, frequent dissemination of information, and position papers rather than permanent committees.
7. Accurate data takes the guesswork out of planning. Historical data, trend lines, and projections are valuable for a planning process.

8. Planning is a conscious effort to influence and/or control change. Strategies for change generally affect structure, process, and attitude.

9. Change involves trade-offs because resources are limited.

10. The best strategy for advancing an institution is to concentrate resources on those elements crucial to success.

11. Unfortunately, planning can rarely be neat, complete, definitive or linear like many descriptions and models imply. Most of our choices are qualitative, tentative judgments based on a combination of hard data and professional instincts -- rather than precisely calculated probabilities. Planning results in more incremental than abrupt change.

12. Planning procedures must interface with established cycles in institutional life -- such as the academic calendar, contact year, fiscal year, collective-bargaining cycle, accreditation cycle, etc.

13. Institutional planning, departmental planning, and program planning occur simultaneously. The planning at and for these mutliple levels also deals, simultaneously, with multiple timeframes.

14. Long-range institutional planning defines aspirations and what must be done (the strategy) to make the aspirations reality. The participants in the process are representing the College -- not their respective areas or other special interest groups.

15. Short-range or operational planning should be the responsibility of each division, department, program, or administrative head. Short-range planning should focus on the techniques which are necessary to achieve a long-range strategy.

Many institutional plans have limited relevance because the board of trustees, president, or authors of the plan did not define the questions they wanted to plan to answer before the plan was developed.

A long range plan should answer many of the questions which follow. The questions are grouped in segments for which objectives and action might be developed.

The list is not exhaustive or complete. The leadership on the board, the president, and other key officials should be involved in a process designed to help them define what they want the long range plan to help them achieve. This process should be repeated (at least) every three years.

Enrollment

1. What will be the headcount and FTE (full time equivalent) enrollment each of the next five years?

2. How many applicants and admits will be necessary to achieve the desired enrollment?

3. How will the headcount be distributed among the following categories:

   a. Full time/part time
   b. Resident/commuter
   c. Under-graduate/graduate
   d. Male/female
   e. New students/continuing students
   f. New students:
      - First-time any college
      - Re-admits
      - Transfers
   g. Freshmen, soph, junior, senior
   h. Age groups such as:
      - less than 21
      - 21 to 30
      - 30 to 50
      - over 50
   i. Financial aid need categories
   j. High academic risk/low academic risk

4. How many associate, baccalaureate, and master degrees will be awarded each of the next five years in each of the majors being offered?

5. What will be the desired ratio between total full time equivalent faculty and total credit hours produced? Graduate faculty FTE and graduate credit hours produced? Upper division faculty FTE and upper division credit hours produced? Lower division faculty FTE and lower division credit hours produced?

Academic Programs

1. What is the current taxonomy of courses offered for transcript credit?

2. What criteria will be used to add and delete courses from the taxonomy?

3. What is the taxonomy of degree programs?

4. What criteria will be used to add and delete degree programs? Some of the criteria that could be used to determine if a degree program should be retrenched or abandoned are: enrollment, graduate placement records, cost, administrative burden (computer, inventory, counseling, etc.), financial impact on other programs, marketing and public relations value.

5. What are the standards of performance for each course and each degree program?

6. What techniques(s) will be used to measure performance on each standard?

7. What are the special programs that will be necessary during the next five years?

8. What are the criteria for adding and deleting special programs?

9. What are the standards of performance for each special program?

10. What new baccalaureate degree programs and master degree programs should be researched during each of the next three years?

Marketing and Admissions

1. What are the primary and secondary geographical markets during the next five years?

2. What are the primary and secondary age markets during the next five years?

3. What are the primary and secondary academic markets during the next five years?

4. What are the criteria for determining whether the College should open extension centers in other population areas?

5. How should the schedule of classes for each subject area be distributed over the available time (7 a.m. to 10+ p.m.) and the available days (Monday through Saturday)?

6. How can alumni, full time faculty, part time faculty, and other staff be used as volunteers to assist the marketing, recruiting, admissions efforts?

7. What will be the relative emphasis given to person-to-person contact, the literature and newsprint, radio, and television in the marketing, recruiting, admissions efforts?

8. What will be the primary (or central) and secondary (or supporting) themes or focii of the marketing strategy (quality, geography, value-added, personalized, small, Christian, denominational, athletics, coed, graduate school, the professions, liberal arts, price, . . .)?

9. What techniques will be used to successfully compete with the other colleges in the area -- both public and private?

10. How many new full time freshmen and transfer students will need to be registered (enrolled) each of the next ten semesters and five summers?

11. How much and what kind of institutional (financial) aid will be allocated to support the efforts of admissions to acquire the desired student profile?

Finances

1. What will be the total operating expenses (budget) for the College each of the next five years?

2. What will be the capital improvements (new construction, renovation, and alteration) during each of the next five years?

3. What will be the capital equipment acquisitions during each of the next five years?

4. What will be the total revenue each of the next five years from:

   a. Tuition
   b. Fees
   c. Auxilliary
   d. Development (restricted and unrestricted)
      - Alumni
      - Other individuals
      - Corporations
      - Foundations
      - Government sources
      - Other sources
   e. Other

5. What will be the total student aid needs during each of the next five years?

6. What will be the dormitory occupancy level during each of the next ten semesters and five summers?

7. How will the range and mid-point of the salary scale for each class of employee compare with the scale for comparable classes among the local, regional, and national competition?

Other

There are other segments for which specific questions should be developed before the planning process is initiated. The College's leadership may also want the long range plan to deal with questions or issues that do not relate in a specific way to any of the established segments.

1. Are there any baccalaureate degree majors the College will maintain regardless of the annual number of baccalaureate degree graduates in the major(s)? If so, which one(s)?

2. Are there any positions which must be filled by members of a particular group (race, religions, ethnic, geographical)? If so, which one(s)? What is the minimum number of positions among the full time faculty, staff, or administration that should be held by members of this group?

Data are a very crucial element of successful planning. A board of trustees should insist on receiving timely, accurate data. The president should insist on established, organized reports.

Every decision to collect, classify, analyze, and report a particular kind of data must be sure to include consideration of the cost of the effort. The administrators requesting new reports should be able to identify the decision(s) they need to make which require(s) the report. In addition, criteria should be established which help management determine the frequency of different management reports (e.g.: on request, monthly, semi-annually, annually, etc.).

SUMMARY

The rational development and implementation of management guidelines that are appropriate to the unique characteristics of a given college can serve as a practical tool for leading the college through the 1980's. The process of establishing and monitoring a college's performance on certain variables will signal problems in time for corrective action to be taken before the problem becomes a crisis.

The first level of accountability for mismanagement or poor leadership of an institution belongs to the leader that does not define -- or insist that acceptable, functional definitions be established for -- the basic policies, limits, and guidelines that will help an institution advance. The effective leader will develop (or facilitate the development of) framework for advancing the college. This framework -- or these guidelines -- can be one of the "givens" used by those who are responsible for program development and administration. As always, the process will demand the ability to cope with elected or self-appointed representatives of small, but vocal special-interest groups.

The conceptual as well as practical differences or distinctions between leadership and management, and management and administration will continue to be interesting topics for discussion. Meanwhile, the future of many colleges depends, in part, on the demonstrated quality of education delivered and the ability of their leaders to anticipate problems, recognize opportunities, define needs, and create the environment in which desired change occurs while the daily, routine procedures are administered in an efficient and effective way. Appropriate guidelines which define and help monitor efficiency and effectiveness will promote advances in quality, vitality, and stability.